


MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR: FRED SLIGHT
FROM: LES JANKA 
SUBJECT: Middle East Article

In response to your request of September 3, I am attaching a draft of a statement which would be used in response to the question contained in your memo.

There is nothing to be gained from submitting only answers to specific questions apart from the context of the President's overall Middle East policy. We have a good story to tell and the attached draft jumps on this opportunity to tell it.

September 8, 1976

US POLICY ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE

Since taking office, President Ford has accorded top priority to the Middle East as a foreign policy concern. A peaceful settlement in the Middle East is a matter not only of choice but also of necessity for the US and for all nations of the world. We have seen how the most recent war and the oil embargo in 1973 brought ~~about~~ untold human suffering to the Middle East, disrupted the world economic situation and threatened great power confrontation. A repetition of the events of 1973 would be much worse, posing the gravest of threats not only to the Middle East but to the US and the world in general. This is why the President is committed to continuing search for peace.

In the aftermath of the October war, the US was able to assist Israel, Egypt and Syria in negotiations which produced agreements that reduced the danger of another war and improved prospects of a final and durable peace. The Sinai Agreement concluded in September 1975 reduced sharply the prospects of renewed conflict and was a significant step toward an eventual overall settlement in the Middle East. We remain determined to keep alive the momentum for a peace settlement from which all nations will benefit.

At the same time, we have enhanced our close relations with Israel and provided the economic and military means needed to ensure its security and survival. The two foreign assistance requests submitted to Congress

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since August 1974 totalled over \$4.2 billion in military and economic aid to Israel for a 27-month period, compared to just over \$6 billion for the preceding 25 years. These figures speak louder than words.

The United States has also sought and developed good political and economic ties with many of the Arab states. The confidence and trust of the Arab nations is not only in the direct interest of the United States but is also an essential element of our ability to assist in bringing a just peace to the Middle East.

The US has provided economic assistance and limited amounts of non-lethal military equipment to Egypt in support of President Sadat's moderate policies which have been so instrumental in helping the area move closer to peace. Such support for Egypt from the US, Western Europe, Japan and Arab oil producers has been essential in maintaining Egyptian confidence in the peace process and close relations with the West, particularly in light of severe Soviet pressures on Egypt in the economic and military supply fields. Our economic assistance to Syria serves the same objectives and represents tangible evidence of American willingness to help the Arab nations turn their attention toward peaceful development. In providing this assistance, the Administration has consulted fully with Congress and has also made clear to the Arabs that nothing will be done by the US to upset the military balance to the disadvantage of Israel.

✓ The Administration opposes economic boycotts of a friendly country as an instrument of policy and is taking realistic steps to deal with it. Tough measures have also been taken to ensure that no American citizens are subjected to discrimination by foreign governments. Last November 20, after a six-months Cabinet level study, the President announced a series of measures for dealing with this complex problem in a manner consistent with our moral principles, our laws and our economic and foreign policy interests. These measures, which have only recently begun to take effect, have put an end to the possibility of foreign-inspired discrimination against Americans on the basis of race, religion, sex or national origin.

The United States is also working intensively with interested foreign governments and American companies to alleviate other aspects of the boycott. Specific, effective actions have also been taken by the Departments of State, Commerce and Justice. However, it is essential to recognize that this economic boycott of Israel for political purposes cannot be ended by unilateral action of the US. Only a Middle East peace settlement can accomplish that. Therefore, the actions of the Administration have been realistic, designed to alleviate the effects of the boycott, in contrast to the sort of sweeping gestures which would neither weaken nor end the boycott and whose effects might prove more harmful than helpful to our objective fostering a climate

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conducive to an overall settlement in the Middle East.

Our recent diplomatic efforts have been devoted to preventing the spread of the tropic Lebanese conflict and working with ^{the} Lebanese and other interested governments to try to bring about an end to the fighting and a political resolution. Until the tensions and contradictions caused by the Lebanese situation can be resolved, it is hard to see any realistic prospect of moving ahead on an overall settlement.

The United States stands ready to assist on the Arab-Israeli conflict as best we can. We remain seriously determined in seeking further progress towards an overall settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, ensuring the right of all nations in the Middle East to live in peace.